

VZCZCXYZ1235  
PP RUEHWEB

DE RUEHKB #0323/01 0641407  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
P 041407Z MAR 08  
FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0114  
INFO RUCNFUR/DARFUR COLLECTIVE  
RHMFISS/CJTTF HOA

UNCLAS KHARTOUM 000323

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE  
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DEPT FOR AF/SPG, S/CRS  
DEPT PLS PASS USAID FOR AFR/SUDAN

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KPKO](#) [SOCI](#) [AU](#) [UN](#) [US](#) [SU](#)

SUBJECT: SIGNATORY AND NON-SIGNATORY REPS SIT TOGETHER WITH UNAMID  
TO DISCUSS CEASEFIRE COMMISSION UNAMID UNABLE TO STOP FIGHTING IN  
WEST DARFUR BUT WILLING TO TRY TO SUPPORT HUMANITARIAN EFFORT

REF: KHARTOUM 319

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SUMMARY  
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¶1. (SBU) UNAMID convened a meeting of Ceasefire Commission stakeholders - including UN civilian political representation and both DPA signatories and non-signatories - to provide an overview of CFC efforts and solicit the input of factions regarding their concerns and grievances. The CFC explained the reduced benefits liaison officers could expect under UNAMID, such as no Mission Subsistence Allowance, and proposed a slimmed-down structure of rebel representation. The USG should push for an immediate Joint Commission meeting to address many of the political issues that continue to impede the limited functioning of the CFC.

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UNUSUAL GATHERING OF CFC STAKEHOLDERS  
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¶2. (SBU) AU-UN Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) Deputy Force Commander (DFC) Emmanuel Karenzi, in conjunction with Ceasefire Commission (CFC) Chief of Staff Colonel Steven Van Neel, convened a February 29 meeting of CFC stakeholders, including Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) signatories and rebel non-signatories, and representatives from UNAMID Civil Affairs, Joint Mediation Support Team (JMST), Joint Mission Analysis Cell (JMAC) and the office of the Joint Special Representative (JSR). The aim of the gathering, as set out by the DFC, was to provide an update on CFC activities and gain the views of the armed groups themselves regarding ceasefire- and UNAMID-related developments. After some initial "brainstorming," the participants settled on four general areas of discussion: CFC Restructuring and Representation, Mission Subsistence Allowance (MSA), Identity Cards and the relationship of UNAMID to the armed actors. (Comment: While these are well-worn topics of discussion within the CFC, and no breakthroughs occurred, the meeting was extraordinary in that it corralled signatories, including the GoS, and non-signatories in the same venue to discuss ceasefire and security-related issues for the first time since late ¶2006. The one notable absence was the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), which UNAMID was unable to contact in advance of the meeting. End Comment.)

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RESTRUCTURING AND REPRESENTATION  
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¶3. (SBU) CFC Chief of Staff Van Neel described the new structure of the commission as envisioned under UNAMID, emphasizing that it must be all-inclusive (single chamber) and that the number of rebel reps,

now called "liaison officers (LO)," will be downsized to seven per faction - one at the CFC headquarters in El Fasher and two at each of the Sector headquarters (reftel). The LOs will act as focal points for communication and coordination between UNAMID and the armed factions. Karenzi requested that all factions provide a list of their seven nominees no later than March 10. The DFC also observed that the military component of UNAMID continues to push for an immediate Joint Commission meeting, where CFC restructuring and other ceasefire-related issues with political implications can be addressed. (Comment: The USG should support this initiative, as the CFC will continue to be constrained without receiving clear political guidance from the Joint Commission. Ultimately, the final composition of any ceasefire mechanism will not be possible to determine until principal combatants agree to stop fighting. End Comment.)

¶4. (SBU) Most of the rebels, including JEM-Peace Wing, Sudan Liberation Army Free Will (SLA-FW) and SLA Non-Signatories Faction (SLA-NSF), quietly acknowledged the proposed restructuring, though several suggested also having one LO at each UNAMID base camp. SLA-Minawi reps objected most vociferously to the reduction, stating that they would not accept the decision unless it was decreed from the political level. (Comment: Given that the mandate and structure of the CFC is laid out in legal documents - the DPA and 2004 N'djamena Humanitarian Ceasefire Agreement (HCFA) - the SLA-Minawi protests are not entirely unjustified. Nonetheless, SLA-Minawi submitted on March 3 a list of eight names (after proposing seven LOs, UNAMID subsequently agreed to eight - two each at CFC HQ and the three Sectors) to serve as liaison officers throughout Darfur. End Comment.)

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MISSION SUBSISTENCE ALLOWANCE  
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¶5. (SBU) Payment of Mission Subsistence Allowance (MSA) continues to aggravate tensions between the peacekeeping force and armed factions. Under AMIS, signatory (including the GoS) and non-signatory reps alike were paid \$4900/month (at CFC HQ) and \$2700/month (in Sectors). AMIS disbursed MSA through September 2007, but payments for October-December remain outstanding. Signatory and non-signatories conveyed a united position on MSA: They should be paid immediately in full through December 2007 and they should receive payment at the original rates, not reduced amounts as recommended by AMIS in mid-2007. The DFC reiterated that, under UNAMID, liaison officers will not receive MSA nor generally receive the same level of support as offered by AMIS. (Note: Under some pressure from donors and recognizing the distortionary effects of exorbitant MSA, AMIS decided to lower payments to \$1000/month at CFC HQ and \$500/month in Sectors for a reduced number of representatives. This approach remains contested by the parties, who were directed to the AMIS Liquidation Team for clarification. End Note.)

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IDENTITY CARDS  
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¶6. (SBU) Rebels complained that their ID cards expired December 31, 2007, and that, to carry out their CFC-related tasks, they must have renewed cards and access to certain UNAMID facilities. The DFC skillfully explained the UN's badging policies - that no rebel or GoS reps would be allowed free access to UNAMID compounds - but acknowledged that an interim system of access passes might have to be worked out. Privately, the DFC noted to FieldOff that the rebels' insistence on ID cards is a "backdoor" attempt to become part of UNAMID, as they were part of AMIS (and thus paid as military observers). As a stop-gap measure while the issues of access badges and venue are sorted, CFC meetings are convened in the USG-funded Peace Secretariat. (Note: Post continues to welcome AF/SPG's views on the disposition and possibility of on-going funding of the Peace Secretariats in El Fasher and Khartoum. End Note.)

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RELATIONSHIP OF UNAMID WITH THE PARTIES  
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¶7. (SBU) With the transition from AMIS to UNAMID, the Deputy Force Commander explained that the nature of the relationship between the armed factions and the peacekeepers would inevitably evolve too. He underscored that UNAMID will continue to place great emphasis on maintaining and improving channels of communication with all stakeholders, who he charged with expediting UNAMID's work rather than obstructing it (for instance, by denying access to patrols). The CFC Chief of Staff underscored that UNAMID's relationship with the parties will still be guided by the DPA, HCFA (notwithstanding their deficiencies) and relevant UN Security Council Resolutions, but that it must also be shaped by developments in any eventual peace process. He also broached the notion of creating an "interim monitoring mechanism," which would require that liaison officers facilitate UNAMID efforts in monitoring and verifying specific armed clashes or other hostilities.

¶8. (SBU) Having been ejected from the CFC and - like the signatories - expelled from UNAMID camps - SLA-NSF representative Colonel Abdou Ahmed Ismael, questioned the outlook his faction should adopt vis-à-vis UNAMID, especially since levels of communication have dropped off. Ismael pressed the DFC to seek clarity from the political level on its stance toward the non-signatories. (Comment: Abdou is probably the most articulate, pragmatic and savvy of any of the rebel reps. He understands that UNAMID, and the peace process, cannot be successful without the participation of his "group," which contains elements from both Abdul Shafie and Abdel Wahid. JEM, though absent from the meeting, would likely have raised the same concerns about not having a "formalized" mechanism to communicate with UNAMID and interact with other stakeholders. End Comment.)

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COMMENT  
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¶9. (SBU) The meeting, while largely unremarkable in substance, was noteworthy in its composition, bringing together the range of stakeholders (except JEM) who will be integral to any viable cessation of hostilities in the future. FieldOff urged that the CFC - even if it is unable to carry out active investigations - hold similar meetings on a regular basis to ensure, at a minimum, that there is an open forum for UNAMID's military, police and civilian components, as well as observers from the U.S. and European Union, to engage with the GoS, rebel signatories and non-signatory factions.

¶10. (SBU) The discussion highlighted four areas that the USG should seek to influence to help lay the foundation for more effective monitoring and better communication flow among the relevant parties:

-- Press the EU to re-instate a civilian observer on the CFC; this will assist in providing international political visibility to issues raised in the ceasefire context, which, if a cessation of hostilities is attained, will become the cornerstone of a peace process.

-- Urge the GoS to accept a "one chamber" concept that includes all major rebel groups, and allow for their representation at both CFC HQ and in Sectors.

-- Push UNAMID and the AU (specifically, the AMIS Liquidation Team) to resolve - once and for all - the issue of MSA by disbursing without delay the final tranche of payments, at the reduced rate, to all previously authorized rebel and GoS reps. According to the office of the JSR, the funds (which come from the UK and Netherlands) are available. While "paying off" the factions may be distasteful, UNAMID cannot allow the contentious issue of MSA to remain an underlying source of friction that could undermine perceptions of the peacekeeping force.

-- Finally, the USG should support UNAMID's military leadership in calling for an immediate Joint Commission meeting to gain resolution, at the political level, on many of the ceasefire and security-related issues that the CFC is not empowered to fix on its

own.

FERNANDEZ